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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 66th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Spaans (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 120: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued) (A/46/934/Add.1 and A/46/945)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that at its 87th meeting, held that morning, the General Assembly had decided to reopen consideration of agenda items 116 and 120. He invited the Committee to begin with agenda item 120 and drew its attention to the note by the Secretary-General on financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (A/46/934/Add.1) and the report by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/46/945).

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report on financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (A/46/945), said that the Advisory Committee had examined in detail the proposals by the Secretary-General set forth in document A/46/934/Add.1. Under resolution 46/195, the General Asssembly had appropriated $42,876,720 gross, or $42,062,000 net, for UNAVEM covering the period 1 January to 31 October 1992 and had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to $10.7 million gross, or $10.5 million net, with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee.

3. The Security Council had endorsed the proposals by the Secretary-General to expand the mandate of UNAVEM to include, inter alia, an electoral component and increase the number of civilian police monitors from 90 to 126. In order to implement the operational plan of the expanded verification mission, the Secretary-General had indicated that an amount of $62.3 million gross, or $60.4 million net, would be required. That figure, which included the original appropriation and an additional amount of $19.4 million gross, or $18.4 million net, would cover the cost of the expanded mandate and meet an estimated shortfall of $4.4 million in the original appropriation authorized by the General Assembly.

4. The report of the Advisory Committee indicated a number of reasons why it had found the estimates somewhat difficult to analyse and included in an annex a breakdown of the additional requirements of UNAVEM II between its original and enlarged mandates in order to shed further light on the proposals before the General Assembly. In accordance with the observations and recommendations in its report and taking into account the resources already appropriated by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee recommended that an additional $15 million gross, or $14 million net, should be appropriated and assessed under the conditions set forth in paragraph 33 of the report.

5. The Advisory Committee recognized that in the past, when equipment or vehicles had been transferred from one mission to another, the sending mission

(Mr. Mselle)

had been credited and the receiving mission had been charged for the related cost. In making the recommendation set forth in paragraph 27 of its report, the Advisory Committee was aware that that practice had often created a burden for Member States, particularly those which had paid their assessments in full. The burden arose from the fact that Member States had to be assessed twice for the same equipment or vehicles before they eventually benefited from their share of the credit to the sending mission. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee urged that that matter should be given thorough consideration by the Secretariat in order to settle the accounting problem related to that question, without in any way creating an additional burden for Member States.

6. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) noted with satisfaction the statement in paragraph 15 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/46/934/Add.1) that an office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola had been established to coordinate United Nations activities related to the Angolan peace process. That set an excellent example to be followed in the future. Nevertheless, his delegation would like assurances that UNAVEM and the Government of Angola, through UNDP, were not developing duplicate communication and transport services and trusted that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General was ensuring proper coordination in that regard.

7. Mr. RAE (India) expressed satisfaction that annex X to the note by the Secretary-General on financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission contained a map indicating UNAVEM II deployment. That information was very useful and all future reports by the Secretary-General on the financing of peace-keeping operations should include similar maps. Paragraph 21 of the report by the Advisory Committee referred to the question of a civilian component of peace-keeping operations. The Advisory Committee had recommended on more than one occasion that it would be useful to obtain qualified civilian personnel from Member States in order to reduce the costs of large operations. In that connection, he inquired what the Secretariat had done in order to implement such recommendations and what it proposed to do in the specific case of UNAVEM II.

8. Mr. CHABALA (Zambia) said that the financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission was of great importance to Zambia, which was a friendly neighbouring country and had recently made a transition to a multi-party system. The Government and people of Angola were committed to a successful peace process. That commitment must be matched adequately by assistance from the international community and the United Nations. The funds requested were in effect very modest and the Fifth Committee should support the Advisory Committee's recommendations. Zambia supported those recommendations on the understanding that, if additional requirements arose, the Secretary-General could continue to avail himself of the commitment authority, with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, granted under General Assembly resolution 46/195. Lastly, he stressed that the United Nations must ensure the success of the peace process in Angola.

9. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), responding to the question raised by the representative of Canada, said that the Advisory Committee had tried to elicit information from the representatives of the Secretary-General concerning the exact role of UNAVEM II as financed from the regular budget and the various components of extrabudgetary contributions provided directly or through UNDP to the Angolan authorities. Although the Advisory Committee had been unable to obtain a clear explanation in that regard, it recognized the extremely important role of bilateral and multilateral inputs in efforts to assist the Angolan parties.

10. In paragraph 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee referred to the statement of the Secretary-General that "Angola being a sovereign and independent country, the organization and supervision of all tasks under the Peace Accords is the responsibility of the Angolan parties themselves". In view of that, the Angolan parties were receiving bilateral and multilateral technical assistance to meet their objectives. In the last sentence of paragraph 18 of its report, the Advisory Committee indicated that it trusted that the role of UNAVEM II in the electoral process would be fully coordinated with the activities of the parties concerned. Accordingly, every effort should be made to avoid duplication wherever possible.

11. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that it was also his understanding that the role of the Special Representative was to prevent such duplication and that he would stress the need to avoid duplication in that regard to all parties concerned, including the Special Representative. In reply to the question raised by the representative of India, he said that the Secretariat was totally open to the use of human resources from Member States for peace-keeping operations. In that connection, the Secretariat had to determine whether such resources would be provided free of charge or through recruitment, both of which arrangements could be envisaged. Member States could be requested to provide human resources for peace-keeping operations only when the Secretariat was reasonably certain of the staffing level for a particular operation. Although he did not know if any such request had been made for UNAVEM II, he would provide the Committee with the necessary information on efforts by the Secretariat to use civilian personnel from Member States in peace-keeping operations.

AGENDA ITEM 116: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (A/C.5/46/85)

12. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Austria, Australia, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Japan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, said that numerous General Assembly resolutions stated that the single unified international civil service, with common terms and conditions of employment established in accordance with the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), was essential for the efficient functioning of all agencies in the United Nations system. In resolution 46/191, the General Assembly had again affirmed its central role with regard to the elaboration of the conditions of

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

service for the United Nations common system and that of ICSC as the independent technical body responsible for the regulation and coordination of those conditions of service.

13. The General Assembly and the Fifth Committee had been asked to reopen the current item as a matter of urgency in response to the information that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was continuing to pay its Professional staff a special post allowance in contravention of the terms and conditions of employment established by ICSC and, what was more, in breach of General Assembly resolutions 45/268 and 46/191. The matter was particularly disturbing because it was clear that ITU had not made an error of interpretation, but had recognized that the payments were not in conformity with its obligations under the ICSC Statute and article 8 of its agreement with the United Nations. The common system was essential for the development of an effective international civil service and unless common personnel standards and arrangements were maintained the benefits would be lost to the Member States and to the staff. The question must be addressed immediately in order to maintain confidence in the system. It was important to take an early decision because ICSC was holding its regular meetings with all of the agencies and staff associations during the following two weeks in London and the General Assembly needed to have the relevant technical advice available in order to give the issue full consideration at its forty-seventh session.

14. The Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly adopt a resolution reiterating the decision it had taken in December 1991 concerning the ITU payment and requesting ICSC to examine the impact on the common system of the decisions taken by the Secretary-General and Administrative Council of ITU. In addition, it would be well for the Economic and Social Council to look at all the association agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, particularly ITU, at its next session.

15. Mr. REY (Colombia) said that he wished to raise a number of points which needed to be considered before any decision was taken. First, in considering the decision taken by the ITU Administrative Council, account must be taken of the very nature of that body, which was composed of Government representatives, who were presumably following clear and precise instructions consistent with the general policies advocated by their respective countries. It was clear from the documentation contained in the note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/85) that the resolution of the Administrative Council had been adopted only after lengthy debate. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the decision, it was clear that the question had been carefully weighed beforehand.

16. Second, it was also clear that the Administrative Council had sought to take full account of General Assembly resolution 46/191 in reaching its decision. Nevertheless, it had justified that decision on the grounds of the special circumstances prevailing. Given the important nature of the work of the specialized and technical agencies, perhaps there was a need to look more

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

closely at the common system and the possibility of making provision for special arrangements to deal with exceptional circumstances.

17. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) wanted to know whether the note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/85) contained all the documents on the subject submitted by the Secretary-General of ITU to the Administrative Council. Although no representative of ITU was present, he would welcome any information the Chairman could provide on that matter. He also wished to know whether the documents submitted to the ITU Administrative Council had been transmitted beforehand to ICSC and whether that body had had the opportunity to comment on them. Finally, he asked whether the Chairman intended to hold informal consultations on the subject, in accordance with the usual practice.

18. Miss SAPUTELLI (International Civil Service Commission) said that she was unable to provide an immediate answer to the question by the representative of the United Kingdom but would attempt to obtain the relevant information.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that ITU had been informed of the present meeting but had not sent a representative. He confirmed that informal consultations on the subject would be held.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.